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The Ladder

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Daughters of Bilitis
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In order to help defray publishing expenses we are asking for donations of $1.00 for one year of THE LADDER. If you wish to receive future issues and to help the cause please send in the coupon on page 12.

The PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - - D. Griffin

I wish to thank all those who wrote to us, sending in their donations, comments and suggestions.

I was somewhat dismayed by those who did not wish to be on "the mailing list of an organization such as this".

In 1953 there was a Supreme Court decision upholding the right of a publisher to withhold his subscription list from a Congressional investigating committee. For details, see the article in this issue, "Your Name Is Safe".

Therefore your names on our mailing list are legally protected and you have naught to fear.

I would like to go back to the second paragraph which states - "an organization such as this" - Such as this?

I personally know the lass who wrote those words. In a later paragraph of her letter she gave me the details of all the gay bars in a certain city. She frequents these bars and apparently is not afraid to be seen in them. Yet, she doesn't want her name on our mailing list. Sound logical?

Let me again state that this is a homosexual and heterosexual organization that wishes to enlighten the public about the Lesbian and to teach them that we aren't the monsters that they depict us to be.

I must also go back to her letter in which she states ". . .but the kids in fly-front pants and with the butch haircuts and mannish manner are the worst publicity that we can get."

Very true. Our organization has already touched on that matter and has converted a few to remembering that they are women first and a butch or fem secondly, so their attire should be that which society will accept. Contrary to belief, we have shown them that there is a place for them in society, but only if they wish to make it so. They now do.

I quote from one of our "changelings". "I find that because now I am wearing women's slacks and letting my hair grow long I am getting a wider variety of friends and I have neighbors instead of people next door. I no longer have the feeling that everyone is watching me."

So you see, we are progressing in that field as in others. It's slow, yes, but the new members we have gained just since our first issue of The Ladder have recognized the need for help and they are offering to aid us in any way they can.

A few people cannot educate the public and themselves but many can.. Give us those thoughts which have been lolling in your brain. Your name needn't be signed to your letter, nor printed.

Your innermost desire is to be "recognized". Well, you won't by thinking, but by doing. We have started the ball rolling. How about pushing it?

PSYCHIATRIST URGES MEDICAL, LEGAL
UNDERSTANDING OF HOMOSEXUAL

The very great majority of homosexual acts do nothing to destroy the social structure or to disrupt the family, Dr. Norman Reider, chief of psychiatry at Mt. Zion Hospital, San Francisco, recently stated.

Speaking before the California Academy of General Practice in Los Angeles, Dr. Reider declared his belief that modern laws against homosexuals are largely unfair, unjustified and ineffective.

Noting that present attitudes and laws affecting sexual behavior stem largely from old religious traditions, he declared that "sin is confused with crime". The vague and confused laws governing sexual behavior, he said, do little to help society and instead "give police a dangerous discretionary power."

The confusion in the law books is matched by a similar confusion in the medical books, and there is no complete agreement on the causes of homosexuality or on the best treatments, he said. Dr. Reider added that certainly neither punishment nor ridicule has any helpful effect.

Medical men are now learning that some homosexuals can be helped by psychiatry, and perhaps a few have actually been cured.

The noted psychiatrist called for greater understanding on the part of the medical profession. When homosexuals seek medical help they usually need the services of a skilled and experienced psychiatrist but some will accept treatment only from a family physician. In either case, he said, "the doctor must not talk to the homosexual as if homosexuality were a sin."

SAN FRANCISCO POLICE RAID REVEALS LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OF CITIZEN'S RIGHTS

Friday night, Sept. 21, San Francisco police raided the Alamo Club, popularly known as Kelly's. Hauled into the city jail and booked on the charge of frequenting a house of ill repute were a reported 36 women.

At the hearing the following Monday we understand only four of those arrested pleaded not guilty. We feel that this was not due to actual guilt on the part of those so pleading but to an appalling lack of knowledge of the rights of a citizen in such a case.

To combat this lack, and in answer to many queries we have received, The Ladder next month will print "What To Do In Case of Arrest".

The raid at Kelly's, plus other police activity in San Francisco, decided us to change the topic of the Oct. 23 discussion meeting.

Attorney Benjamin M. Davis, when apprised of the number pleading guilty after the raid, volunteered to speak. He will discuss "The Lesbian and The Law", with special emphasis on a citizen's rights in case of arrest.

We urge everyone to make a special effort to attend this meeting, which is an attempt to remedy the lack of knowledge which has become so evident. The meeting will begin at 8:15 p.m. in Studio 51 at 465 Geary St., San Francisco.

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"Never Plead Guilty" is more than the title of Jake Ehrlich's book; it is advice to be remembered.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Tuesday, Oct. 23 - Attorney Benjamin M. Davis will speak on "The Lesbian and The Law" at 465 Geary St., Studio 51, at 8:15 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 27 - Hallowe'en party at 651 Duncan St. at 8 p.m. $1.50 donation per person includes refreshments. Phone reservations (VAlencia 4-2790) by Friday night, Oct. 26.

Thursday, Nov. 8 - Monthly business meeting at 1030-D Steiner St., 8 p.m. Everybody welcome.

Saturday, Nov. 17 - Bowling, 7 p.m. at the Sports Center, 30th & Mission, meet at the coffee counter.

Sunday, Nov. 25 - Brunch at 651 Duncan St., 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Come and get acquainted. A $1.00 donation per person. Reservations should be made by Friday, Nov. 23, to VAlencia 4-2790.

Tuesday, Nov. 27 - Panel discussion at 465 Geary St., Studio 51, 8:15 p.m. Subject will be "What Are You Afraid Of?", the first in a series of discussions on Lesbian fears - both real and imaginary. On the panel will be Pat Hamilton and Del Martin. Dr. Vera Plunkett will act as moderator.

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We welcome any suggestions and/or additions to our schedule of activities. There is room for all interests and talents. -Ed.

CHRISTMAS GIFT . . .

Why not give The Ladder to a friend for Christmas? Or send it to your parents, minister, a doctor or lawyer. Just tell us it is a gift and we'll enclose a card - with or without your name.

In the Christmas issue we are planning to run fiction and poetry. Your manuscripts will be most welcome.

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THANK YOU . . .

We are happy to say the response to the first edition of The Ladder has been tremendous. We have gained many readers, members and monetary donations as well as books, clippings and newspapers. We are indeed grateful.

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THE OPEN MIND . . .

A New York telecast (WRCA-TV) on the subject of homosexuality August 4 was so well received that two more programs were scheduled: "Homosexuality: the Psychological Approach", Sept. 29; "Homosexuality: the Cultural Approach", date to be announced.

The round table discussion on this truly-named "Open Mind" series was led by Richard Heffner. Guests were Dr. Robert Laidlaw, psychiatrist; Florence Kelley, lawyer, and Dr. Arthur Swift, minister and department head, the New School for Social Research. The intelligent and unbiased treatment of the subject by these panelists is to be commended.

THE POSITIVE APPROACH ' 'EDITORIAL

Certainly there is a marked reaction of fear and retrenchment among the Lesbian population of San Francisco after the recent raid of The Alamo Club, popularly known as Kelly's.

A paralyzing fear has been heaped upon an ever-present dread of detection The persecuted are seeking cover once again. The innocent are convinced of their guilt. The tolerant become intolerant of their fellows. Growth is stultified by a sludge of misunderstanding.

Where will it lead? To a miserable half-existence of apprehension, self-pity, cynicism, hopelessness and paralysis? In some cases, perhaps.

BUT THIS NEED NOT BE! NOT IF REACTION IS REPLACED BY ACTION - POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE ACTION!

Examine the facts. The Lesbian is a woman endowed with all the attributes of any other woman. As an individual she has her own particular quota of intelligence and physical charm. She has equal opportunity for education, employment, intellectual and cultural pursuits. Her only difference lies in her choice of a love partner.

To the uninformed this difference may constitute "a sin against nature", with all its moral and legal implications. To the informed this difference merely means another form of individual adjustment to self and society.

The salvation of the Lesbian lies in her acceptance of herself without guilt or anxiety, in her awareness of her capabilities and her limitations, and in her pursuit of a constructive way of life without misgivings or apology.

To seek others like herself is only natural. However, it is often times this problem of meeting others that leads the Lesbian into circumstances and places, not particularly of her taste or choice, which may expose her vulnerability to prejudice and suspicion.

The Daughters of Bilitis is an organization which offers the Lesbian an outlet in meeting others. She can talk over her problems with people versed in experience and study of her nature. She can relax in an atmosphere of understanding. There is room for every talent and interest--education (both of the homosexual and of the public), group therapy, public relations, social activities, publications, social service, research. Whatever the interest there is work to be done and fun to be had.

Only by constructive thinking and a program of definite direction can the Lesbian find her niche in society. As she thinks positively, so will she act--and so will society react. Negative thinking breeds only trouble and inertia. It helps to nourish prejudice and bigotry.

Don't listen to what "they" say -- what do YOU say?

D.M.

Your Name Is Safe!

Already, with only one issue of The Ladder published, we have run up against the fear that names on our mailing list may fall into the wrong hands, or that by indicating interest in this magazine a person will automatically be labeled a homosexual.

This is not so.

Donors to The Ladder include many people from the professions - lawyers, social workers, psychiatrists, businessmen - as well as the numerous individuals who are interested in the problem, either from a personal or intellectual standpoint.

Daughters of Bilitis is not outside the law - we advocate no illegal actions by anyone. It is an organization solely dedicated to education and research with reference primarily to the lesbian and secondarily to the entire subject of sexual variancy.

The organization has obtained legal counsel on all phases of its operation, and within the very near future will file for incorporation under the laws of the State of California.

As stated, our aims are simple. We are not a political organization, nor are we affiliated in any way with any group either of the past or present. It is true that we are very

deeply indebted for the advice and assistance afforded us both by the Mattachine Society, Inc., and One, Inc., but we are an organization distinct from both of them.

Your donation of $1.00, which entitles you to receive The Ladder for one year, means just that. It indicates your interest in a problem which is receiving more and more nationwide attention every month - it does not "label" you. Your name on our mailing list is as inviolate as the provisions of the Constitution of the United States can make it.

Our Constitution guarantees Freedom of the Press, which includes the right of all citizens to buy the books, magazines, newspapers and other publications they wish so long as these do not advocate overthrow of our government and certain other basic illegalities.

In 1953, in the case of the U.S. vs. Rumely (345 U.S. 41, 56-57) the Supreme Court of [illegible] the right of a citi-

"The command that 'Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech or of the press', has behind it a long history. It expresses the confidence that the safety of society depends on the tolerance of Government for hostile as well as friendly criticism, that in a community where men's minds are free, there must be room for the unorthodox as well as the orthodox views.

"Once the Government can demand of a publisher the names of the purchasers of his publications, the free press as we know it disappears. Then the specter of a Government agent will look over the shoulder of everyone who reads."

This Supreme Court decision points the way to even stronger safeguards of a free press, a freedom which is a basic necessity of the democratic way.

The decision also guarantees that your name is safe!

RRADERS RESPOND . . .

"Congratulations on The Ladder. Find enclosed my $1.00 to help the cause. Wish it could be more, but though I can't give more personal financial help I can and will do all in my power (thru ONE and personally) to further your endeavor.

"We plan to tell all women writing to ONE of the Daughters and of The Ladder. I hope to have an editorial on it in the next issue.

"Best wishes for your success."

Ann Carll Reid
Editor, One Magazine
232 South Hill St.
Los Angeles, Calif.

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"Please enroll me as an associate member. Enclosed is the membership fee and dues for one year. . . My family happens to be one of the very understanding ones.

M. S., San Francisco

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"How about a poetry page in your publication? I might contribute some of mine for consideration . . ."

M. R., San Francisco

Send them along. -Ed.

"I cannot tell you what a source of both inspiration and pleasure The Ladder contained for me within its pages. I, as an invert, can only know of what momentous importance such a movement as yours can mean, for the ultimate good of all of us.

"Like so many others . . . I am living a completely repressed existence, sublimating my nature, whenever possible, in my profession.

"One of the insertions in The Ladder caught my attention and I could not help but muse over it with some irony. The part about 'Come out of hiding'. What a delicious invitation, but oh, so impractical. I should lose my job, a marvelous heterosexual roommate, and all chance of finding work . . .I would be blackballed all over the city.

"I am interested-very much interested in becoming a member of the Daughters of Bilitis. Although at present discretion prevents me from making any moves to help the cause . . . there is one very effective weapon we, who must fight from a hiding place, still have - the fountain pen and the typewriter."

J. M., Cleveland, Ohio

Money helps, too. -Ed.

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"I am very much in sympathy with your efforts and hope this organization will succeed in a big way."

M. W., Hamden, Conn.

"...so you have embarked upon THE crusade. Your very stirring message made quite an issue in this household.

"The title of your group is quite apropos, the title of the publication has a wealth of meaning. Your purpose is, of course, foremost, and I'm sure I am one of many who wish it boundless success. But, unfortunately, there is a 'but', the immediate thought is 'are they ready for it yet?' No doubt this has been hashed over in many executive sessions before your group took the step toward publication. Though I was never one to take an ostrich view of things, still I must hesitate when such things as our way of life get down to a black and white state of things - in print yet! Though your little mag is one of a few on the subject, still doubts do present themselves - at least to this one.

"At any rate, put me on the list just for what it's worth. . . . And may the next rung of The Ladder be a large step in the progress of your undertaking".

T.F., Seattle, Wash.

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"Thank you for Volume 1, Number 1 of The Ladder. It is a welcome addition to our library and we are interested in receiving all subsequent issues."

Paul H. Gebhard, Exec. Dir.
Institute for Sex Research
Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana

"I would be interested to be of service to your members if there are any ways you might find in the future. The 'elusive female variant' does not seem to avail herself of psychotherapy to any degree compared to the male. This is one project that I would be particularly interested in pursuing.

". . . Wishing you success with your venture, I remain

Dr. Chas. W. Norton
San Francisco, Calif.

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". . .There are so many problems we must face, and it seems to me that an organization such as this would be of the utmost help to us. The wisdom of others who have solved problems similar to our own should be of inestimable value. Heaven knows, the world is full of people who don't understand, and we who do understand should try to make life easier for one another. To be sure, my own problems may be insurmountable, but I may be able to help someone else with theirs."

A. S., San Jose, Calif.

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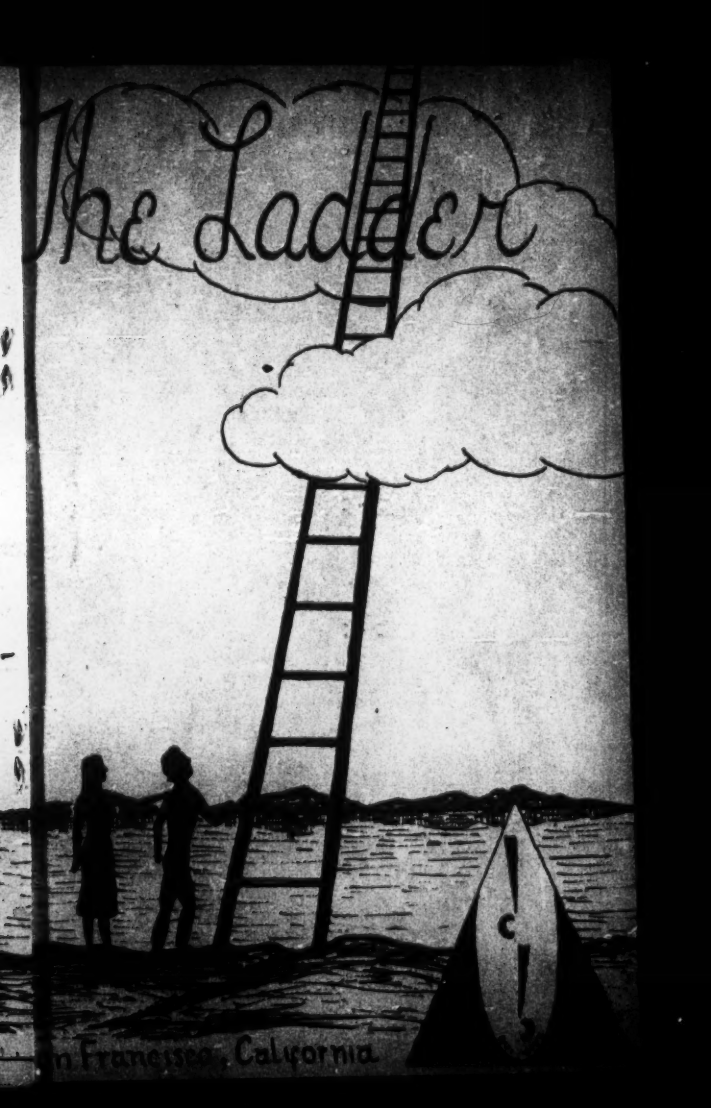
THESE ARE JUST A FEW OF THE LETTERS RECEIVED. WON'T YOU ADD YOURS? READER RESPONSE HELPS US TO GAUGE RESULTS OF PAST EFFORTS AND GIVE DIRECTION TO FUTURE ISSUES.

NOT ONLY DO WE WANT LETTERS, BUT ALSO MANUSCRIPTS ON THE SUBJECT - FICTION, NON-FICTION OR POETRY.

from the city of many moods


The Ladder
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